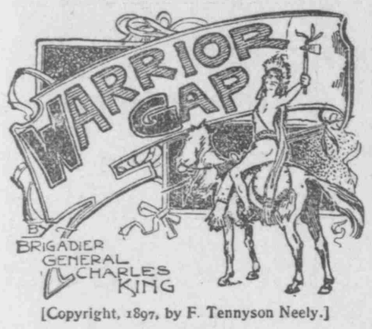
THAT BOY OF MINE.

He's rosy as the summer sky
At dawning of the day;
His little "goo-goo's" signify
The things that he would say.
He's innocent of all desire
In babyland to shine,
And yet the neighbors all admire
That little boy of mine.

Like many other baby boys
He dearly loves a row.
And oft I wish he'd stop his noise,
And smooth his troubled brow.
But when his little eyes are dry—
Where tiny sparkles shine—
The wealth of Klondike would not buy
That little boy of mine.

His faults are few—if faults they be—
I tell them in a take
To visitors, but generally
Feel sorry that I spoke,
For ere they have a chance to laugh
His grandma cries: "Why, Joe,
You used to make more noise by half
Some thirty years ago."

Then as we lay him down to rest,
In childhood's snowy bands,
And fold upon his little breast
His chubby little hands,
In pure and perfect innocence
He looks almost divine—
The sweetest gift of Providence
Is that wee boy of mine.
—Peter Grant, in Chicago Daily Record.



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CHAPTER XX.

A day had dawned on the Big Horn never to be forgotten by those who watched the conflict from the stockade, never to be recalled by those who went forth to fight. Broad daylight had come and the sun was peeping over the far horizon as strong arms bore the unconscious officer within the post, and the commander eagerly questioned the men who came with him. Their story was quickly told. They had fled before overpowering numbers of the Sioux the night before, had made their way through the timber in the darkness and come ahead all night, groping their way from ridge to ridge until at the peep of day they found themselves in sight of familiar landmarks, and could see the gleam of the waters of the Fork dancing away under the dawn. And then, as they essayed to ride on they found the Indians all around them. Whichever way they turned the foe appeared, but only in scattered parties and small numbers. Not once did more than half a dozen appear in sight, and then, confident of speedy succor from the fort, they had decided to make a dash for it, and so rode boldly out into the open. But now a score of warriors popped up and barred the way, while others far out at flank or rear kept up long range fire. One man was shot through the body and fainted and had to be borne along. Then the lieutenant was shot in the leg, but no one knew it until they saw his boot was running over with blood, and he was growing ghastly white, even though he kept encouraging and directing. But when at last the cavalry met them and brushed the Indians away from the front, Capt. Drum, who rode at their head, ordered Mr. Dean taken right into the post while he dashed on to punish the Sioux, "and he is giving them hell, too," said the excited trooper, "for there couldn't have been more than a hundred Indians all told."

Ah, not in sight, perhaps, poor lads!—not in sight of horse, foot or fort; for if there were only a hundred, how came it that the fire grew fiercer still, and that presently every musket in the infantry skirmish line, too, was blazing on the foe? By this time cavalry and infantry both had disappeared over the curtaining ridge, and the colonel's face grew grave and haggard as he listened. Three-fifths of his little garrison were out there battling against unknown numbers. They had gone to rescue the detachment and bring it safely in. That rescue was accomplished. The precious package for which so much had been risked was here—but what detained the command? Why did they not return? Beyond doubt far more Indians were out there now than when first the firing began. "Gallop out, Mr. Adjutant, and tell the major to withdraw his line and fall back on the stockade," was the order—and with a lump in his throat the young officer mounted again and started. He was a pet in the garrison, only in his second year of commission. They saw him gallop through the gate, saw him ride gallantly straight for the curtaining ridge beyond which the smoke was rising heavily now, saw him breasting the slope, his orderly following, saw him almost reach it, and then suddenly the prairie seemed to jet fire. The foremost horse reared, plunged and went rolling over and over. They saw—plainly saw through their glasses, and a shriek of agony and horror went up from among the women at the sight—half a dozen painted savages spring out from behind the ledge, some on pony back, some afoot, and bear down on the stricken form of the slender young rider now feebly striving to rise from the turf; saw the empty hand outstretched, imploring mercy; saw jabbing lances and brandished war clubs pinning the helpless boy to earth and beating in the bared, defenseless head; saw the orderly dragged from under his struggling horse and butchered by his leader's side; saw the bloody knives at work tearing away the hot red scalps, then ripping off the blood-soaked clothing, and, to the music of savage shouts of glee and triumph, hacking, hewing, mutilating the poor remains, reckless of the bullets that came buzzing along the turf from the score of Springfields turned loose at the instant among the loopholes of the stockade. It was 800 yards away in the dazzling light of the rising sun. Old Springfields did not carry as do the modern arms. Soldiers of those days were not taught accurate shooting as they are now. It was too far for anything but chance, and all within a minute or two the direful tragedy was over, and the red warriors had darted back behind the ridge from which they came.

"My God! sir," gasped the officer who stood at the side of the awe-stricken post commander, "I believe it's Red Cloud's entire band, and they've got our poor boys surrounded! Can't we send help?"

"Send help! Merciful heaven, man, who's to help us? Who's to protect these poor women and children if we go? I have but two companies left. It's what those fiends are hoping—have been planning—that I'll send out my last man to the aid of those already gone, and then they'll dart in on the fort and what will become of these?"

Great drops of sweat were pouring down the colonel's face as he turned and pointed to the huts where now, clinging to one another in terror, many poor wives and children were gathered, and the air was filled with the sobbing of the little ones. Up from the stockade came two young officers, their faces set and rigid, their eyes blazing. "In God's name, colonel," cried the foremost, "let me take my men and clear that ridge so that our people can get back. One charge will do it, sir."

But solemnly the commander uplifted his hand. "Listen," said he, "the battle is receding. They are driving our poor fellows southward, away from us. They are massed between them and us. It would only be playing into their hands, my boy. It's too late to help. Our duty now is here."

"But good God, sir! I can't stay without raising a hand to help. I beg—I implore!"

"Go back to your post at once, sir. You may be needed any minute. Look there! Now!"

And as he spoke the colonel pointed to the southeast. Over the scene beyond the divide to the south hung the bank of pale-blue smoke. Out on the slope lay the ghastly remains of the young adjutant and his faithful comrade, who, not ten minutes before, had galloped forth in obedience to their orders and met their soldier fate. Out to the southeast the ridge fell gradually away into the general level of the rolling prairie, and there, full a thousand yards distant, there suddenly darted into view three horsemen, troopers evidently, spurring madly for home.

"They've cut their way through! Thank God!" almost screamed the spectators at the parapet. But their exultation died an instant later. Over the ridge in swift pursuit came a dozen painted, feathered braves, their ponies racing at lightning speed, their arrows and bullets whizzing along the line of flight. The horse of the foremost trooper was staggering, and suddenly went plunging headlong, sending his rider sprawling far out on the turf. He was up in a second, dire peril nerving him to desperate effort. His comrades veered at his

The other turned back to meet his running comrade.

cry for help and glanced back over their shoulders. One, unnerved at sight of the dashing foemen in pursuit, clapped spurs again, and bending low, rode madly on. The other, gallant fellow! reined about in wide, sweeping circle, and turned back to meet his running comrade. They saw him bend to lend a helping hand, saw him bend still lower as three of the Indians leaped from their ponies, and, kneeling, loosed their rifles all at once; saw him topple out of saddle, and his stricken horse, with flapping rein, trot aimlessly about a moment, before he, too, went floundering in his tracks; saw the other soldier turn to face his fate by his dying comrade's side, fighting to the last, overwhelmed and borne down by the rush of red warriors. Strong men turned aside in agony, unable to look on and see the rest—the brutal, pitiless clubbing and stabbing, the fearful hacking of lance and knife—but others still, in the fascination of horror, gazed helplessly through the smoke drifting upward from the blazing loopholes, and once a feeble cheer broke forth as one shot took effect and a yelling Indian stretched out dead upon the sward. Then for a brief moment all eyes centered on the sole survivor who came sweeping down the slope, straight for the stockade. Almost it seemed as though he might yet escape, despite the fact that his horse, too, was lurching and stumbling, and his pursuers were gaining rapidly, defiant of the fire of the little fort. Reckless of order and discipline, a dozen soldiers nearest the gate rushed out upon the open bench, shouting encouragement and sending long-range, chance shots. But with every stride the fleeing steed grew weaker, stumbled painfully and slackened speed, and soon they saw him slowing down despite the frantic jabbing of the spurs, and with drooping head and bleeding nostrils giving up the fight. And then, at sound of the triumphant yells and jeers of his pursuers, the poor wretch in saddle threw one fearful glance behind him, one despairing look toward the comrades and the refuge still a quarter of a mile away and with shaking hand he turned the brown revolver on his own temple and pulled trigger, and then went tumbling earthward, a corpse. There at least was one scalp the Sioux could covet in vain, for, with shouts of vengeance, the little squad of infantry, deaf to all orders or the clamor of the bugle recall, dashed out over the level beach firing furiously as they ran, and, whether from the superstitious awe with which the Indians view the suicide, or the dread of close combat with the gallant band of blue-coats, the mounted warriors turned and scurried across the prairie, and were presently out of range beyond the ridge again. Then and not till they had reached and lifted and borne the lifeless form of the trooper did the little party condescend to answer the repeated summons from the fort. Then at last they slowly returned, unrebuked, for no man had the heart to chide their daring.

Only once more was there further sight of the one-sided battle. Half a mile or more beyond the bare divide there rose against the southern sky a bold, oblong height or butte, studded with bowlders and stunted pine, and watchers at the fort became aware as the sun climbed higher that the smoke cloud, thinning gradually but perceptibly, was slowly drifting thither. The fire, too, grew faint and scattering. The war whoops rang and reechoed among the rocks, but all sounds of cheering had long since died away. At last, an hour after the fury of the fight began, the colonel, gazing in speechless grief through his field-glass, muttered to the officer at his side:

"Some of them are still left. They are fighting for their lives along that butte."

Only a few, though. One by one the dark dots among the bowlders ceased to stir and move about. Little by little the fire slackened, and all but occasional scattered shots died utterly away. Then other forms, feathered and bedizened, were seen rushing in numbers up the distant hillside, and that meant all was over, and the brutal knives were busily at work. Little by little all sound of conflict, all sight of combatants disappeared entirely, and the unclouded sunshine streamed down upon a scene on which the silence of death indeed had fallen. When at last, late that afternoon, the watchers reported a vast body of Indians drifting away eastward toward the distant Powder river, and venturesome scouts stole out to reconnoiter, backed by skirmish lines from the stricken post, they found the grassy slopes beyond that curtaining ridge one broad field of death, strewn with the stripped and hacked and mangled forms of those who had so gallantly dashed forth to the aid of comrade soldiery at the break of day, so torn and mutilated and disfigured that only a limited few were identified. Officers and men, one after another, had died in their tracks, victims of Red Cloud and the Ogallalla Sioux.

And all for what? Late that night the quartermaster in wild agitation sought his colonel's door, a package in his hands. "For God's sake, sir, look at this!" he cried.

The cords had just been cut, the seals just broken, the stout paper carefully opened and the contents of the precious package exposed to view. It held no money at all, nothing but layer on layer of waste and worthless paper.

CHAPTER XXI.

A week went by at Fort Emory, and not a word came back from Dean. The furious storm that swept the hills and swelled the rivers was the talk of every army post within two hundred miles, while in the gambling hells and saloons of Laramie, Cheyenne and Gate City men spoke of it in low tones and with bated breath. If ever the bolts of Heaven were launched to defeat a foul crime it was right there at Canyon Springs, for the story was all over Wyoming by this time how the worst gang of cutthroats that ever invested the wide west had galloped in strong force to that wild, sequestered nook to murder Dean and his whole party of the hated "blue bellies," if need be, but at all hazards to get the precious package in his charge. Fifty thousand dollars in government greenbacks it contained if Hank Birdsall, their chosen leader, could be believed, and hitherto he had never led them astray. He swore that he had the "straight tip," and that every man who took an honest part in the fight, that was sure to ensue, should have his square one thousand dollars. Thirty to ten, surrounding the soldiers along the bluffs on every side, they counted on easy victory. But the warning thunder had been enough for the young troop leader, and prompted him to break camp and get out of the gorge. They were starting when Birdsall's scouts peered over the bank and the outlaw ordered instant pursuit, just in time to meet the fury of the flood and to see some of his fellows drowned like rats in a sewer.

But who betrayed the secret? What officer or government employe revealed the fact that Dean was going with so much treasure?—and what could have been his object? Birdsall had taken to the mountains and was beyond pursuit. "Shorty," one of his men, rescued from drowning by the mail carrier and escort coming down from Frayne, confessed the plot, and the general was now at Emory investigating. Maj. Burleigh had taken to his bed. Capt. Newhall was reported gone to Denver. Old John Folsom lay with bandaged head and blinded eyes in a darkened room, assiduously nursed by Pappoose and Jessie, who in turn were devotedly attended by Mrs. Fletcher. Possessed of some strange nervous excitement, this energetic woman was tireless in her effort to be of use. Minus ten of their very best, "C" troop still camped at Emory, the general holding it for public escort duty, and, to his huge delight, young Loomis was assigned to command it until Dean should return. There came a day when the news arrived from Frayne that the Laramie column had crossed the Platte and marched on for the Big Horn, and then John Folsom began to mend and was allowed to sit, up, and told the doctor he had need to see Maj. Burleigh without delay, but Burleigh could not leave his bed, said the physician in attendance—a very different practitioner from Folsom's—and the old man began to fret and fume, and asked for writing materials. He wrote Burleigh a note, and the doctor forbade his patient's reading anything. Maj. Burleigh, said he, was a very sick man, and in a wretchedly nervous condition. Serious consequences were feared unless utter quiet could be assured.

Then Folsom was pronounced well enough to be taken out for a drive, and he and Pappoose had the back seat together, while Jessie, with Harry Loomis to drive, sat in front, and Jess was shy and happy, for Loomis had plainly lost his heart to his comrade's pretty sister. Marshall had now been gone nine days and could soon be expected home, said everybody, for with a big force going up there the Indians would scatter and "the boys" would have no trouble coming back. And so this lovely summer afternoon everyone seemed bright and joyous at the fort, listening to the band and wondering, some of the party, at least, how much longer it would be before they could hope to hear from the absent, when there arose sudden sounds of suppressed commotion in the camp of "C" troop. A courier was coming like mad on the road from Frayne—a courier whose panting horse reined up a minute, with heaving flanks, in the midst of the thronging men, and all the troop turned white and still at the news the rider briefly told—three companies at Warrior Gap were massacred by the Sioux, 170 men in all, including Sergt. Bruce and all "C" troop's men but Conroy and Garret, who had cut their way through with Lieut. Dean and were safe inside the stockade, though painfully wounded. This appalling story the girls heard with faces blanched with horror. Passionate weeping came to Jessie's relief, but Pappoose shed never a tear. The courier's dispatches were taken in to the colonel, and Folsom, trembling with mingled weakness and excitement, followed.

[To Be Continued.]

SERENADE OF WOLVES.

Started by a Visitor to the Zoo Who Knew the Hunting Song of the Pack.

In the Century Ernest Seton-Thompson, who used to be known as "Wolf" Thompson, from his familiarity with this particular form of wild animal, tells how he started a wolf serenade at the National "Zoo" in Washington.

"While making these notes among the animals of the Washington zoo, I used to go at all hours to see them. Late one evening I sat down with some friends by the wolf cages, in the light of a full moon. I said: 'Let us see whether they have forgotten the music of the west.' I put up my hands to my mouth and howled the hunting song of the pack. The first to respond was a coyote from the plains. He remembered the wild music that used to mean pickings for him. He put up his muzzle and 'yap-yapped' and howled. Next an old wolf from Colorado came running out, looked and listened earnestly, and raising her snout to the proper angle she took up the wild strain. Then all the others came running out and joined in, each according to his voice, but all singing that wild wolf hunting song, howling and yelling, rolling and swelling, high and low, in the cadence of the hills:

"They sang me their song of the West, the West,
They set all my feelings aglow;
They stirred up my heart with their artless art,
And their song of the long-ago."

"Again and again they raised the cry, and sang in chorus till the whole moonlit wood around was ringing with the grim refrain—until the inhabitants in the near city must have thought all the beasts broken loose. But at length their clamor died away, and the wolves returned, slunk back to their dens, silently, sadly I thought, as though they realized that they could indeed join in the hunting song as of old, but their hunting days were forever done."

An Appropriate Reminder.

He was rather a rackety young man and kept very late hours. He was going on a long journey, and on bidding farewell to his beloved he said to her:

"Darling, when I am far away, every night I will gaze at yon star and think of thee. Wilt thou, too, gaze at yon star and think of me?"

"I will, indeed, dearest," she replied. "If I needed anything to remind me of you I would choose this very star."

"Why?" he asked.

"Because it is always out so late at night and looks so pale in the morning."—Pick Me Up.

Those Loving Girls.

Bess—So you and Fred are really engaged?

Nell—Yes; and you ought to have seen the happy look on the dear fellow's face when I accepted him.

"I'm sorry I didn't see it. What a contrast it must have been from the look of pain on his face when I refused him."—Chicago Daily News.

A Faithful Friend.

Faithful are the wounds of a friend. But the faithful friend will not inflict wounds, except where true friendship requires it.—United Presbyterian.